

Forfeiture Transparency Task Force to meet on June 15

June 10, 2016

The newly created Forfeiture Transparency Task Force will meet at 1 p.m. June 15 at the Gartin Justice Building, 450 High Street in Jackson.

The Mississippi Legislature created the Task Force during the 2016 session through the adoption of House Bill 1410, the Asset Forfeiture Task Force Act. The legislation says, in part, “There is created the Forfeiture Transparency Task Force to address the lack of transparency in certain civil and criminal seizures, forfeitures and disposition of real and personal property.”

House Bill 1410 says, “The duties of the task force shall be to: (a)review all civil asset forfeiture laws and make recommendations to the Legislature for amendments to Mississippi civil asset forfeiture laws that protect innocent property owners; (b)assure greater transparency; and (c)provide greater due process while ensuring that assets used or obtained through unlawful practices are removed from the possession of criminals.”

A report of the Task Force’s findings is due by Dec. 1.

The Legislature called for the 13-member Task Force to include chairs of the House and Senate Judiciary A and Judiciary B committees or their designees; presidents of the Mississippi Prosecutors Association, Mississippi Sheriffs’ Association and Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police; the State Defender; director of the Mississippi Justice Institute at the Mississippi Center for Public Policy; the director or managing attorney of the Mississippi office of the Southern Poverty Law Center; the director of the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics; the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or his designee; and the Attorney General or his designee.

The bill is at this link:

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2016/html/HB/1400-1499/HB1410SG.htm>.

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